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STATE FOR EC: KELLI DAVIS AND EUR: LEA PEREZ

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: EEOC KPAO OEXC SCUL BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE VIEWS ON CHICAGO 2016 OLYMPIC
BID, BASEBALL/SOFTBALL'S POSSIBLE RETURN TO GAMES

REF: A: STATE 2732; B: REASOR-EUR DCMS MARCH 18, 2009 EMAIL

SUMMARY

¶1. (U) On May 11, the Charg sought the support of the President
and the Secretary General of Belgium's Olympic Committee for
Chicago's bid to host the 2016 Summer Games. The Charg also raised
the U.S. desire for the re-admittance of baseball and softball to
the Games. The Belgians said they had been impressed by Chicago's
presentation in Geneva but felt it lacked a spirit of fun; they were
also concerned that security measures not be seen as discourteous or
oppressive. The Belgian officials said the country's representative
to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the IOC president,
Jacques Rogge, would not take a position in favour of any candidate
city but nonetheless play an important role. Regarding baseball and
softball, they advised the federations of both sports to form a
'joint venture' in order to be considered as one sport for the 2016
Olympics.   End summary.

Chicago's 2016 Bid

¶2. (U) The Charg (along with PolEcon Counselor and PD LES
officer) highlighted the strength of Chicago's bid with the Belgian
Olympic officials: it represents the heartland of America, possesses
a superlative infrastructure to support the tens of thousands of
visitors to the Games, and plans to keep many of the events close to
the city.

¶3. (U) The Belgians listed four critical criteria for a successful
candidate city:

*Compactness: holding all the events as close to the Olympic Village
as possible. London's layout was a good example.

*Legacy: the use following the Games of the Olympic Village and
other venues is important. Both Beijing and London's bids did a
good job with this criterion.

*Accessibility and fairness: it is important that events are
accessible to a broad audience and that organizers guarantee that
vendors and hotels do not take advantage of the Games to inflate
prices.

*Security: appropriate but friendly security measures are essential.
 The Belgians were concerned security measures not be oppressive or
discourteous, and cited Beijing's example of congeniality while
maintaining strict security.

¶4. (U) The Belgians said they had been very impressed with
Chicago's presentation in Geneva, especially with keeping many
venues in or close by the city. But they faulted the presentation's
lack of some of the fun and 'spirit and soul' of the Olympics and
recommended Chicago do more in this regard in the run-up to an
October decision in Copenhagen. The Belgian officials also

highlighted the importance of the last 24 hours in Copenhagen, and
urged Chicago to work on its bid until the very last minute.
Regarding the vote in Copenhagen, they said that Belgium's IOC
representative, Jacques Rogge, in his capacity as the current IOC
president, would not take a position in favor of any candidate city
but nonetheless play a vital role in the selection process.

BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

¶5. (U) The Charg raised (per ref B) the importance of returning
baseball and softball to the Olympic games, pointing out that the
sports, while playing an important part in American culture and our
civil rights movement, were now global sports, with baseball played
by more than 100 countries. The Belgians advised the two spo`nd make a joint proposae
sport, in order to b only one of the two
slots for new spthe Belgian officials saQ a male/female balance inmoves toward
a 50/50 representation of women and men at the Games.

¶6. (U) Post will send separate letters to the Cicago 2016 Olympic
committee and to the interQational baseball and softball
federations, shQring the Belgians' observations.

BUSH